

APPENDIX 1: EXTRACTS FROM PLANNING ADVISORY SERVICE (2008) LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS: EVIDENCE BASE



required or separate reports for certain aspects of the study.

- 3.35 Early discussions between local authorities should identify where possible opportunities for joint working may be appropriate.

consultancy

- 3.36 External consultants can be used to provide specialist expertise or plug gaps in the availability of in house resources. Consultants can offer a cost effective solution when the costs of overheads such as staff accommodation, pensions, IT costs and survey costs are taken into account. You will need to be clear about what you want the consultants to do and will need to manage them to ensure they are focused on the key outputs that the authority requires. Several methods of engagement are possible including:

- Engaging consultants on a medium-long term basis through setting up a term commission or call off contract so that advice is provided on specific matters either on a time spent or fixed fee basis against an agreed scope
- Engaging consultants to provide defined inputs normally on a fixed fee basis

- 3.37 The most common savings which can be achieved in relation to consultancy inputs relate to:

- Project management time reducing the number of meetings and liaison required compared with managing 2,3 4 or 5 separate studies
- Data management where a common approach to survey design, data collection, storage and analysis is used
- Survey costs where market research including household or business surveys are required
- Reporting requirements if evidence and findings for each authority can be presented in a single deliverable.

- 3.38 Consultancies may be able to offer multi-disciplinary teams. This can be useful where the skills required to gather evidence for certain topics might not be available in-house. Consultants can bring knowledge and experience of completing studies for a wide number of locations meaning that they are well placed to provide solutions to the issues that may arise. In addition consultants experienced in the particular topic area will have tried and tested approaches to undertaking and managing evidence base studies including explaining the findings of studies at examination.

- 3.39 Many consultants are able to work very closely with the authority as part of an integrated team and may be able to be based within the authorities offices for agreed periods.

- 3.40 For comparison purposes an indication of costs for various consultancy studies or assessments is provided in Table 3.4 below. Local authorities should be careful in considering their own evidence needs and extent of existing information in identifying the resources likely to be required for each study. Consultants may be able to advise on a likely menu of costs depending on different options and an indicative brief.

consultation

- 3.41 PPS 12 identifies that whilst separate consultation on the evidence base is not required local authorities should seek the involvement of relevant groups and organisations in the development of the information base to inform the identification of issues and options.
- 3.42 You should consider including the following stakeholders at the evidence gathering stage:
- landowners
 - house builders and those agents involved in the buying and selling of land and property



table 3.4 – indicative costs various assessments and strategies for a single local authority

assessment	indicative costs (£)
Assessment of the principal physical and environmental characteristics of the local area.	£10,000 – £50,000 Depending on the characteristics of the area and range of information to be collected and level of consultation. A comprehensive analysis of character areas and townscape supported without community engagement would normally cost between £15 – 30k.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	£30,000 – £150,000+ depending on extent, age of existing housing needs assessment and additional household surveys. The significant factor here is the availability of robust locally specific empirical data on housing needs. Excluding survey costs the typical cost of preparing a housing needs and market assessment is in the order of £40-60k.
Housing Land Availability Assessment	£35,000 – £80,000 depending on no. of sites, level of consultation, analysis and reporting and quality of existing GIS and monitoring data. Most studies range between £40 – 60k.
Employment Land Review	£35,000 – £80,000 depending on no. of sites, level of analysis and reporting and extent of existing GIS and monitoring data, and amount of consultation and empirical survey work. Most studies are in the order of £40 – 60k.
Assessment of Retail Needs and Capacity	£25,000 – £100,000+ depending on no. of centres, wider catchment area, level of analysis and reporting, extent of monitoring data, extent of healthcheck information and amount of consultation including household or shoppers surveys. Basic retail study £25 – 40k, Typical retail study £35 – £60k Retail study with a large number of significant centres or extensive empirical work £60k+
Level 1-2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	£40,000 – £100,000+ Depending on the characteristics of the area including extent of water courses, coastal issues and the specification and detail of the hydraulic modelling required to reach an appropriate level of confidence.
Open Space Study	£35,000 – £95,000 depending on extent and quality of existing information, range of assessments to be included and consultation required and nature of implementation and delivery needed. Open space audit £10-£30k dependent on no. of spaces and existing data; Playing pitch assessment £10 – 20k; Indoor sports assessment £5 – 40k depending on surveys and advice relating to management and programmes; Consultation and engagement £5 – 15k; Reporting and implementation strategies £5 – 20k.
Review of Conservation Areas and Additional Conservation Area Assessments	Approx. £10,000 – £25,000 for a review. £5,000 – £35,000 per assessment depending on the size and complexity of the area to be considered, level of survey work and consultation required.
Up to date information base on biodiversity and geological resources	£25,000 – £80,000 Phase 1 habitat survey. Depending on the size and character of the area to be considered and no. of sites.
Landscape Character Assessment	£25,000 – £50,000 Depending on the area to be considered, level of detail, consultation and reporting requirements. Most assessments £30 – 40k.
Tourism Assessment	£15,000 – £80,000 depending on the nature and characteristics of the issues to be considered and the extent of primary survey work and consultation. Basic assessment without primary empirical surveys £25 – 35k
Source: Various local authority and consultancy sources Spring 2007.	



- education authorities (including higher education authorities)
- health providers
- sports clubs
- businesses
- government agencies (e.g. English Heritage)
- residents groups and the voluntary sector
- targeted consultation to identify the range of different views within the community.

- 3.43 This list is not exhaustive and the need to include certain stakeholders will depend on the issues that are likely to arise in a particular area.
- 3.44 Service providers should be aware of the future changes in their sector and the consequent requirements that are likely to arise. Representatives of interest groups can provide information about the needs of their groups.
- 3.45 The timing of consultation is very important, as some stakeholders may be consulted on numerous occasions for different thematic studies, as well as for different DPDs and other corporate strategies. The simplest way to avoid overload of consultees is to ensure that

consultation for specific thematic studies is focused on those stakeholders that are likely to have an interest, rather than a blanket approach to consultation. Where possible try and co-ordinate consultations so that several issues are dealt with at once.

- 3.46 The aim of consultation at the information gathering stage is to identify specific information that will be of use to you in developing the core strategy as well as general aspirations for the future development of the plan area.

scoping and extent

- 3.47 Consultation should be specifically designed to focus on the information which is needed to inform the evidence base and which consultees may have a view on. Consultation should focus on gaining evidence that is useable and can be analysed in a way that provides clear answers and enable you to get to the required key outputs. There may be a temptation to collect lots of information that may not be strictly necessary for the purposes of developing your LDF. This should be avoided as collecting data can be time consuming and costly. The aim should not be to collect data that would be nice to have, but collecting information that provides evidence that can assist in developing policy.

- 3.48 The individual strands of consultation do not necessarily have to be representative however the overall range of methods used should provide a full picture of the range of opinion. The choice of consultation methods should be influenced by the purpose for collecting it.. There are numerous methods of consulting, however it is crucial to ensure the most appropriate and effective methods are used. Further guidance on community engagement can be found in the PAS guidance document 'LDFs – effective community involvement' available at www.pas.gov.uk/ldf
- 3.49 It will also be helpful to local communities and stakeholders to inform them of some of the outputs from the evidence gathering process. This is particularly helpful at the issues and options stage to show how the emerging evidence base is informing objectives and policies set out in the core strategy.
- 3.50 A good example of how this could be done is in Bristol where the City Council has published a "Spatial Atlas" alongside its Core Strategy Issues and options paper. The spatial atlas is a summary of the key facts and figures and recent survey information about Bristol and is available as a booklet and as a CD.

APPENDIX 2: MEDWAY COUNCIL CABINET REPORT 30TH NOVEMBER 2010

CABINET

30 NOVEMBER 2010

MEDWAY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jane Chitty, Strategic Development & Economic Growth

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

Author: Brendan Doyle, Senior Landscape and Urban Design Officer

Summary

The Medway Landscape Character Assessment is a technical document to support landscape-related planning decisions within Medway's countryside and urban-rural fringe areas. It provides an evidence base in support of the landscape and countryside policies within the Local Development Framework Draft Core Strategy. It also sets out landscape guidance for planning officers, developers and the local community when considering proposed development within the rural and urban-rural fringe areas of Medway.

An extensive consultation process has been undertaken that has sought the views of statutory consultees in the planning process and key stakeholders. The study has received a high level of support from all parties.

Please note that copies of the Medway Landscape Character Assessment have been circulated separately to Cabinet Members, Group Rooms and are also available at the Chatham Contact Point and on the Council's website via <http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=2107&Ver=4>

Further copies are also available from the Cabinet Office. Please contact 01634 332509/332008 for further details.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The decision is within the council's policy and budget framework. In line with the current development plan framework for the protection and enhancement of the landscape, this study seeks to ensure that landscape character and local distinctiveness continue to be a material consideration when considering planning applications within the countryside.

1.2 The approach adopted is in line with government guidance under Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable development in Rural Areas.

2. Background

2.1 The protection of important areas of countryside within Medway was previously secured by the designation of 'Special Landscape Areas' within the now defunct Kent and Medway Structure Plan – principally the North Kent Marshes, and by the designation of 'Areas of Local Landscape Importance' (ALLIs) within the Local Plan. These ALLIs form part of the green hillsides and backdrops to the urban area. They also form green buffers which:

- help to maintain the individual identity of urban neighborhoods and rural communities,
- help to protect the countryside from urban sprawl, and
- provide wildlife corridors.

2.2 The Government no longer supports the rigid designation of landscape areas as a means of controlling development. The Government's Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) – 'Sustainable development in Rural Areas' states that rigid local designations '*may unduly restrict acceptable sustainable development and economic activity*'. In place of these designations, PPS7 states that '*carefully crafted, criteria based policies in Local Development Documents¹, utilising tools such as landscape character assessment, should provide sufficient protection to these areas.*

2.3 This document, The Medway Landscape Character Assessment, has been drafted in response to PPS7.

2.4 Landscape Character Assessment is a recognised tool for assessing, valuing and preparing guidance for landscape at national, regional and local levels. This approach has been endorsed by the UK's ratification of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) in 2007. Supported by Natural England and English Heritage, the ELC seeks to provide a new instrument devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe.

2.5 This study has been prepared in line with current national guidance on the preparation of Landscape Character Assessments.

3. Options

3.1 The benefits of this study are as follows:

- It provides a strategic landscape framework for all areas of countryside surrounding Medway;
- It serves as an objective study based on a consistent and recognised methodology, ensuring that new development proposals can be assessed and judged fairly within an overall landscape context;

¹ In Medway's case the Local Development Framework (LDF) and any subsequent Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's).

- It provides an assessment of existing landscape condition and sensitivity but also provides a set of recommended actions, management guidelines and mechanisms whereby the landscape can be protected and enhanced;
 - It provides a valuable framework and context to inform the development of Green Infrastructure and Open Space Planning within Medway;
 - It can be used as a constructive tool for negotiation and discussion when providing advice to applicants on landscape related matters;
 - It has a potentially valuable role in raising general awareness of the importance of landscape and countryside protection and enhancement within Medway.
- 3.2 There are no obvious disadvantages to approving the aims and content of this document. Planning officers have already been introduced to the study and further training will be arranged to highlight the potential role and additional value that it offers in assessing planning applications. Training will be resourced out of existing budgets.
- 3.3 If the contents and aims of this study are rejected by Cabinet, planning officers, developers and their agents and the wider community would need to follow the range of existing landscape planning tools and guidance notes that are already in existence. It should be noted that in certain important cases these instruments pre-date current guidance and are non-specific to Medway.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 Medway needs to respond to current proposals for major housing and infrastructure development including a new settlement at Lodge Hill, new business parks and energy infrastructure on the Hoo Peninsula. Much of the urban-rural fringe areas are also under considerable pressure from new development.
- 4.2 In the absence of rigid landscape designations, the Medway Character Assessment is an essential tool in ensuring that the change that results from new development can be managed in a sensitive way that respects landscape context and protects and enhances the character and local distinctiveness of the rural and urban-rural fringe areas of Medway.
- 4.3 The study breaks down Medway's countryside into locally distinct character areas. It describes the principal characteristics and issues relating to these areas, assesses condition and sensitivity and recommends actions and guidelines that seek to ensure local distinctiveness is retained and enhanced within the development process.
- 4.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment screening has been completed (Appendix 2). It concludes that no differential impacts of the endorsement of this study could be anticipated and a full impact assessment would not be required.
- 4.5 A delegation is sought for the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, to make minor amendments to the LCA following review (see section 2 (Action Plan) of the Diversity Impact Assessment).

5. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
<p>A challenge by Developers and their agents during the Core Strategy Consultation process</p>	<p>A potential challenge could be raised that an incorrect, poorly applied or unsound methodology has been followed in preparation of this Landscape Character Assessment document</p> <p>This risk is rated D-3</p>	<p>The methodology and approach adopted within this study has been carefully considered and follows national guidelines. All aspects of this approach have been fully outlined within the introduction and appendices to this report</p>
<p>Publication by government of an updated guidance note on carrying out Landscape Character Assessments.</p>	<p>The current Countryside Agency guidance on Landscape Character Assessments is dated 2002. Updated guidance is being prepared by Natural England but with no firm date for issue. It is likely that future guidance will continue to follow recognised methodology, but with some updates acknowledging new research findings and examples of best practice</p> <p>This risk is rated C-3</p>	<p>A five yearly update of this study has been recommended. When new guidance is issued a judgement can be made on whether recommendations are implemented immediately or within the five year cycle.</p> <p>It would be unwise to delay the publication of this document whilst awaiting updated guidance. The time lapse for reissue is undetermined and current guidance is still valid. Providing an up-to-date landscape study is considered important.</p>

<p>Review and changes to landscape policies by Coalition Government</p>	<p>There is a potential risk that PPS7 guidance on landscape protection and enhancement is reviewed and updated. The change could revoke the shift away from rigid landscape designations towards criteria based policies. However, this seems unlikely in the light of European Landscape Convention objectives, which strongly support the role of Landscape Character Assessments as a way of protecting and enhancing all landscapes.</p> <p>This risk is rated C-2.</p>	<p>The Medway LCA study provides a valuable and objectively assessed evaluation on the current state of Medway's rural and urban-rural fringe landscapes. A change in government landscape guidance policies will not negate the value and importance of this study. Depending on the nature of policy change, the study is capable of an interim or a full update (recommended to take place every five years).</p>
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6. Consultation

- 6.1 A consultation process was undertaken commensurate with the LCA's role as a technical document. This consultation took place during the months of August and September 2009. Statutory (in the planning process) consultees (Natural England, Environment Agency and English Heritage), as well as key stakeholders (Parish Councils, RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust, Land Securities, Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway, Medway Swale Estuary Partnership, Kent Downs AONB, Friends of North Kent Marshes) were consulted.
- 6.2 A full consultation report that analyses the issues raised and the responses made, has been prepared and is available separately if required. A summary of this consultation report is contained in Appendix 1.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 Cabinet approval of the Medway Landscape Character Assessment would support the Council in demonstrating that it is applying a consistent and sound methodology through the planning process in seeking to protect, manage and plan for the future of Medway's Countryside.
- 7.2 A consistent approach based on current guidance and a recognised assessment methodology will provide a sound basis to support landscape related planning decisions where these decisions are challenged at appeal. Landscape Character Assessment has recently been used successfully within Medway to defend at appeal a planning refusal based on landscape grounds. Approval of the Landscape Character Assessment as a tool for use in the planning process would give the Landscape Character Assessment more weight as a material consideration in assessing planning applications.
- 7.3 There are no substantial financial implications. Only a small number of planning applications will require consideration in relation to the Landscape

Assessment. Such assessment would be carried out with existing staff resource and would not create the need for additional resource.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That Cabinet approves the Medway Landscape Character Assessment as an evidence base for Medway's landscape and countryside policies and as a landscape planning guidance document, and delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, to make any minor amendments.

9. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

- 9.1 The landscape guidance document will enable better informed planning decisions.

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Background papers:

See Bibliography within the Landscape Character Assessment report.

Appendix 1

Medway Landscape Character Assessment Consultation Responses – Summary Report

Introduction

Initial consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders to agree broad parameters, purpose and scope of study. These included the Development Plans & Research Manager, Rural Strategy Manager and the Green Spaces Development Manager. Broader informal consultation with a wider range of internal and external stakeholders was accessed through regular meetings of the Green Grid Forum. Attendance of this group helped to inform an understanding of different issues and perspectives affecting different stakeholder groups.

Formal Consultation

Key stakeholder groups (Green Spaces, Development Management, Local Plans & Research and Green Grid Forum) were introduced to the study through a series of presentations during the months of August and September 2009. The draft report was issued for Consultation in August 2009 with a seven-week consultation response period. From a total of 34 groups/organisations that were consulted, 21 responses were received. Responses were received from all statutory consultees (Natural England, Environment Agency and English Heritage) and a wide range of other interest groups. A list of all external consultees is attached.

Scope of Consultation

This is a technical document and therefore the consultation process has been targeted at those groups considered to have the most relevant interest and expertise within the area of study. However it was considered relevant to attempt to access the views of the wider community. To achieve this, copies of the draft character assessment were sent to all Parish Councils within Medway. Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council responded with some detailed comments but no other responses were received.

Summary of responses

Responses divide into general points raised re. structure of report and general approach with a number of more detailed responses. Consultees were generally highly supportive of this piece of work and the approach that has been taken. Some points were raised that identified conflicts (often arising from the priorities of particular interest groups and their areas of expertise – eg. biodiversity versus cultural heritage interests). When analysing the responses in such cases an effort was made to take account of these views but to balance them within an objective overview of the landscape as a whole. The general principle taken was to incorporate all views that seemed appropriate and relevant to the scale and purpose of the study. All four neighbouring authorities were consulted. Two of these authorities (Tonbridge & Malling and Gravesham) responded, and provided a set of useful and supportive comments.

Regeneration in the Countryside

The study considered carefully within its scope the plans for regeneration within the countryside. Of particular relevance were the developing proposals for Lodge Hill Training Estate. The report's author attended several consultation meetings with Land Securities, including meetings with the local community, arranged a guided tour of all significant inaccessible parts of the MOD estate in order to survey and assess these areas and received a detailed and generally supportive response from Land Securities on the draft version of the report. These comments have been analysed and incorporated where considered relevant into the revised draft.

Protected landscapes

Detailed responses were received from Kent Downs AONB Unit, raising useful and important issues. This included a set of comments from the Valley of Visions team.

Table 1 - List of external consultees

	Organisation
1	Environment Agency
2	Natural England
3	English Heritage
4	Gravesham BC
5	Tonbridge & Malling
6	Medway Swale Estuary Partnership
7	Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway
8	Land Securities
9	Kent Wildlife Trust
10	RSPB
11	Kent Downs AONB
12	Valley of Visions
13	Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Council
14	Friends of North Kent Marshes
15	Allhallows Parish Council
16	Isle of Grain Parish Council
17	Frindsbury Extra Parish Council
18	Maidstone BC
19	Swale BC
20	KCC - Heritage
21	Cuxton Parish Council
22	Groundwork Kent & Medway
23	Countryside Forum

Appendix 2

Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

Directorate Regeneration, Community and Culture	Name of Function or Policy or Major Service Change Medway Landscape Character Assessment		
Officer responsible for assessment Brendan Doyle, Senior Landscape and Urban Design Officer	Date of assessment 05/10/10	New or existing? New	
Defining what is being assessed			
1. Briefly describe the purpose and objectives	<p>A Landscape Character Assessment for the rural and urban-rural fringes of Medway. The document has two principal functions. It provides an evidence base in support of the landscape and countryside policies within the LDF Draft Core Strategy. It also provides landscape guidance for planning officers, developers and the local community in consideration of proposed development within the rural and urban-rural fringe areas of Medway.</p> <p>The document is an evidence base that supports landscape and countryside policies in the Core Strategy. Following Core strategy adoption, this document will strengthen the role and benefits of preserving local distinctiveness in the countryside and will underpin the significance of landscape as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.</p>		
2. Who is intended to benefit, and in what way?	<p>The landscape itself; the communities who live and work in that landscape; visitors and recreational uses of that landscape; developers, investors and landowners. All these groups will benefit from clear guidance on what is distinctive about that landscape, and understanding how it can be sensitively managed and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.</p>		
3. What outcomes are wanted?	<p>Clear guidance for planning officers, developers and their agents and the wider community on what is locally distinctive about the rural and urban-rural fringe landscapes of Medway and how they can be protected and enhanced through sensitive and appropriate forms of development.</p>		

4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	Contribute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarity and easy accessibility of document ▪ Endorsement of document by Cabinet ▪ Support of statutory consultees, key stakeholders and the wider community 	Detract <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of clarity and poor accessibility of document ▪ Document not endorsed by Cabinet ▪ Lack of support from statutory consultees, key stakeholders and the wider community
5. Who are the main stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medway Council ▪ Statutory consultees (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) ▪ Relevant interest groups (eg. Kent Wildlife Trust) ▪ The wider community 	
6. Who implements this and who is responsible?	Implementation will be via the operation of the statutory town planning system. Medway Council is responsible as the planning authority.	
Assessing impact		
7. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>racial/ethnic groups</i>?	YES	The Landscape Character Assessment is concerned with achieving a high quality and sustainable environment for all groups living in and accessing the countryside. This study is not targeted at and does not aim to benefit any particular group.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	This study has been considered primarily as a technical document by the Planning Authority. It has not therefore been subject to a comprehensive community consultation exercise. No issues relating to this matter were raised during the consultation process that was undertaken. It will be available for further consultation as part of the Pre-publication Draft Core Strategy consultation exercise.	
8. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>disability</i>?	YES	As for 7.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	As for 7.	
9. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>gender</i>?	YES	As for 7.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	As for 7.	
10. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>sexual orientation</i>?	YES	As for 7.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	As for 7.	
11. Are there concerns there	YES	As for 7.

could be a have a differential impact due to <i>religion or belief</i>?	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	As for 7.	
12. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>people's age</i>?	YES	As for 7.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	As for 7.	
13. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>being transgendered or transsexual</i>?	YES	As for 7.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	As for 7.	
14. Are there any <i>other</i> groups that would find it difficult to access/make use of the function (e.g. speakers of other languages; people with caring responsibilities or dependants; those with an offending past; or people living in rural areas)?	YES	The document was produced only in English. It will be available online and copies will be available for purchase from the Planning Department.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	No request has been made for documents to be made available in other languages	
15. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>multiple discriminations</i> (e.g. <i>disability and age</i>)?	YES	As for 7.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	As for 7.	

Conclusions & recommendation		
16. Could the differential impacts identified in questions 7-15 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact?	YES	No differential impacts were identified that would suggest there could be a potential adverse impact.
	NO	
17. Can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or another reason?	YES	
	NO	
Recommendation to proceed to a full impact assessment?		
NO	This function/ policy/ service change complies with the requirements of the legislation and there is evidence to show this is the case.	

NO, BUT ...	What is required to ensure this complies with the requirements of the legislation? (see DIA Guidance Notes)?	Minor modifications necessary (e.g. change of 'he' to 'he or she', re-analysis of way routine statistics are reported)
YES	Give details of key person responsible and target date for carrying out full impact assessment (see DIA Guidance Notes)	

2. Action plan to make Minor modifications		
Outcome	Actions (with date of completion)	Officer responsible
An updated plan as required	Minor modification will be agreed by the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture	Robin Cooper

Planning ahead: Reminders for the next review	
Date of next review	The Landscape Character Assessment is a landscape planning document that aims to provide guidance to planning officers, developers and their agents and the wider community. It is intended that the document will be reviewed on a five yearly basis
Areas to check at next review (e.g. new census information, new legislation due)	To check boundaries are still valid and make any recommendations for change.

<p>Is there <i>another</i> group (e.g. new communities) that is relevant and ought to be considered next time?</p>	<p>No</p>	
<p>Signed (completing officer/service manager) Brendan Doyle</p>	<p>Date 18/11/10</p>	
<p>Signed (service manager/Assistant Director) Stephen Gaimster</p>	<p>Date 18/11/10</p>	

APPENDIX 3: EXTRACTS FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY, SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE (2002) *LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT: GUIDANCE FOR ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND*

2.10 Making judgements: This stage is based on the results of the characterisation process and involves making judgements about landscape character to inform particular decisions related to the type of application. Different types of judgement may need to be used to inform different types of decision (see **Chapter 7** for further information). Thus this stage may result in a range of different outputs, involving different types of judgement, each aimed at a particular need. These outputs may either:

- directly inform decisions about landscape through, for example, the preparation of planning policies, and strategies for the conservation and enhancement of landscape character; or
- feed into broader decision-making tools (such as Environmental Impact Assessment or Quality of Life Capital) and strategies (such as Regeneration Strategies or Woodland Strategies) where landscape is only one of a broad range of environmental issues under consideration.

The role of objectivity and subjectivity

2.11 There has been long-standing debate about the role of objectivity and subjectivity in dealing with landscape. The search for supposedly objective approaches has reflected a desire, in some quarters, to remove the element of personal judgement from the process. In Landscape Character Assessment it is accepted that there is a role for subjective inputs, but these must be made in a systematic and transparent way. The process of characterisation should be an objective process in the main, while making judgements to inform

decisions involves an element of subjectivity which can be clarified by using criteria agreed beforehand.

2.12 Surveying the elements that make up a landscape, mapping and describing landscape types, which many might consider to be wholly objective matters, can still involve subjective judgements. This can only be avoided if the whole task were to be reduced to one of measuring attributes from maps and analysing the data quantitatively (but this approach would not tease out all aspects of character and sense of place). To illustrate this point, a surveyor could record that there are 20 hectares of woodland in a landscape as an objective fact; to then record that this woodland is a dominant feature or a key characteristic of the landscape necessarily introduces an element of subjectivity into the characterisation.

2.13 Nevertheless, this is still a very different type of subjectivity to one which judges that one landscape is better than another in some way. The important thing is that everyone involved in the process, or in the use of an assessment, understands which elements of it are relatively objective and unlikely to be disputed, and which ones are more likely to be viewed differently by different stakeholders. There is also scope for a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to characterisation, each contributing their own judgements about variations in character.

Application at different scales

2.14 Landscape Character Assessment can be applied at a number of different scales from the national or indeed European level to the parish level. Ideally assess-

ments at different scales should fit together as a nested series or a hierarchy of landscape character types and/or areas so that assessment at each level adds more detail to the one above. The analogy of Russian Dolls is often used to describe this hierarchical relationship, but the idea of a camera zooming in, from a distant broad view, to a detailed small-scale portrait, also makes the point (**Figures 2.2** and **2.3**). The three main levels at which Landscape Character Assessment are carried out are:

- **National and regional scale:** Work at this level is to a small scale (typically at 1:250,000) and may cover the whole of a country or a large region (as has been done for both England and Scotland) to identify broad patterns of variation in landscape character. These patterns result from the underlying geology and landform overlaid with the influence of broad ecological associations and key aspects of settlement and enclosure history. This results in the identification of distinct landscape types and areas at this broad scale, for example chalk downland or montane plateau, as well as the character areas where they occur, which are distinct geographical areas such as the South Downs or the Cairngorms.
- **Local authority scale:** Within these broad patterns of landscape character it is possible to identify a finer grain which can be mapped and described through Landscape Character Assessment applied at the county, district or unitary authority level in England or at

CHAPTER 7

MAKING JUDGEMENTS BASED ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

INTRODUCTION

7.1 The use of Landscape Character Assessment in making judgements is a fast-moving scene amongst practitioners. This chapter sets out some main principles on the subject. **Topic Paper 6, *Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity***, will be issued in the Summer of 2002 to address one of the key areas where practitioners need to make judgements on this topic.

7.2 The main value of having a Landscape Character Assessment is to help in the process of managing change in a particular place. All sorts of change will shape future landscapes, and by applying this tool in an appropriate way, alongside other tools, we can help to ensure that such changes make a 'positive' contribution.

7.3 For this reason, most assessments will usually move beyond the characterisation stage to the stage of making judgements to inform particular decisions. Making judgements as part of an assessment should not concentrate only on the maintenance of existing character. This may be one part of the judgements made. The focus should be on ensuring that land use change or development proposals are planned and designed to achieve an appropriate relationship (and most often a 'fit') with their surroundings, and wherever possible contribute to enhancement of the landscape, in

some cases by creating a new character.

7.4 Judgements based on landscape character need to take account of several factors. Most importantly it is vital to decide who is going to be involved in making the judgements. For practical reasons some assessments may still rely mainly on judgements made by professionals. It is nevertheless important to involve stakeholders in this part of the process if the judgements are to command wide support and are to be as fully informed as possible. Many different stakeholder groups need to be given opportunities to contribute, especially:

- those who manage the land, especially farmers and foresters;
- local residents and community groups;
- other users of the land, including visitors and those who take part in recreational activities.

7.5 An historical perspective is important to help understand the way in which a landscape has evolved over time to take on its present character, and how both natural forces and human intervention have contributed to its evolution. With such understanding, decisions about future change can be placed in an historical context and ideas about, for example, restoration of some earlier historic character can be

well-informed and based on a sound historical rationale (see **Topic Paper 5**).

WHAT TYPES OF JUDGEMENTS ?

7.6 Ways of making judgements based on character will vary depending upon the particular issue that is being addressed. This in turn will reflect the purpose of the assessment and the type of judgements that are required. As set out in **Chapter 2 (para 2.10)**, these judgements will either:

- be specifically related to decision-making based on landscape character; or
- be designed to contribute to wider environmental decision-making tools where landscape is only one of several topics to be addressed.

7.7 A number of such environmental and sustainability decision-making tools now exist. Some, like Environmental Impact Assessment and landscape capacity studies, are well established. Others, like the Natural Heritage Futures programme (used in Scotland), and Quality of Life Capital (in England) are newer and still emerging. Landscape Character Assessment links to these tools in different ways. **Topic Paper 2** provides information about these tools. It particularly highlights the way that

APPENDIX 4: EXTRACTS FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY, SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE (2002) TOPIC PAPER 3: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - HOW STAKEHOLDERS CAN HELP

Communities in Easter Ross has explored similar issues. More recently, an innovative partnership between Suffolk's Women's Institutes and local authorities has resulted in the Suffolk Millennium Challenge Landscape Recording Project, which is surveying and assessing changes in the county's landscape (**Box 1.6**).

Questionnaires

1.28 Questionnaire surveys can sometimes help to provide the views of individuals and can be used both to verify, and to add to professional work, on characterising the landscape. The drawback of this method is that it does not allow for the dialogue and interaction between people that are a feature of more interactive methods. However, questionnaires can often be the most manageable approach when dealing with larger scale landscape work, for example, at the county or regional level, and can permit relatively large numbers of people to contribute. Hertfordshire, for example, has used questionnaires to allow people to comment, provide information on local character, and provide a cross check on the professional characterisation (**Box 1.7**).

Box 1.6: Suffolk Millennium Challenge Landscape Recording Project

A partnership between planning authorities and Women's Institutes in Suffolk has devised a way of mapping and monitoring landscape change over time. Over 150 local WI groups each 'adopted' a one kilometre square of land and recorded its character through maps and photos during 1999. Analysis of the squares revealed three main indicators for landscape change (i.e. linear and point features, plus land use). Results are reported in *Suffolk's Environment...towards sustainable development*, a document published jointly by the planning authorities. Re-surveying of all 156 squares will occur every five years to discover overall trends. However, due to local enthusiasm, a rolling programme of annual interim surveys is already underway. Results will feed in to future landscape assessments.

The significance of the work is that it:

- establishes the distinctiveness of Suffolk's varied landscape, supplementing the Countryside Agency's Character Areas;
- provides supporting evidence for countryside protection policies;
- increases public awareness of the distinctiveness of their local landscape and the pressures affecting it, thereby contributing to Local Agenda 21 aims;
- demonstrates the effectiveness of partnerships, successfully combining voluntary resources with the expertise available from local authorities;
- provides a clear methodology of monitoring change that could be applied consistently elsewhere.

Source: *Suffolk Coastal District Council (2002)*

Box 1.7: The use of questionnaires for community involvement in Hertfordshire

Since 1997 Hertfordshire has been using questionnaires as a way of involving communities of place. These are sent out in parallel with the main assessment and, depending on the size of the study area, go either to all residents or to a representative sample.

The questionnaires incorporate two main questions. In one, respondents are asked to mark on an OS map extract areas of landscape that they consider to be 'distinctive' (this term is broadly defined). In the other they are given an opportunity to describe these areas at some length.

Responses yield information about perceived area boundaries, community preferences, key features to illustrate and, subject to the skills of the respondents, expert advice. Respondents' own wording can sometimes be adopted for area descriptions and the list of respondents is useful for a range of follow-up work, such as helping with countryside management initiatives.

/Contd...

Box 1.7 (Contd)

Key benefits of this consistent approach are that it is representative, yields results, and can be used at different scales. Typically outputs will support and enrich the professional assessment, but they also lead to small but significant changes to the grouping of sub-areas. Although fairly demanding of time for analysis of responses, the approach is also not that expensive.

Source: Hertfordshire County Council (2002)

Regional perceptions

I.29 In the pilot study of the New Map of England [8] studies on public perception of landscape character were carried out in parallel with the professional work on characterising the landscape at the regional scale. Six of the regional character areas in South West England were used as sample areas. Both residents and visitors to the area were involved in a number of exercises that included drawing lines around areas of distinctive character, identifying characteristic elements and pinpointing the nature of change. These studies suggested that the concept of character at the large scale does mean something to people and that they are able to identify areas of distinctive character, and to identify the same sort of distinguishing characteristics that are recognised by professionals.

I.30 All these examples indicate that it is entirely feasible to involve both interested parties and local communities in the process of characterising the landscape.

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN MAKING JUDGEMENTS

I.31 It is important to actively involve stakeholders in making judgements about the possible future directions for the landscape, especially at the more local level. It is local communities of interest and place who have most to gain (or lose) by the decisions reached, and their involvement is needed to devise ways forward and to ensure ownership of the necessary actions. This requires a new role for professionals, providing information, designing frameworks for participation, producing information which inspires, and facilitating stakeholder participation.

I.32 In addition to helping to achieve consensus, stakeholders can assist in making judgements by:

- identifying what in particular they value in the landscape and why;
- providing views on change in the landscape and its effects;
- engaging in the development of visions or scenarios for the future of the landscape, or by responding to them;
- helping to devise mechanisms for bringing about change and participating in implementing them.

Communities of interest**Consultation/steering groups**

I.33 Communities of interest, especially those who have direct influence over the landscape (e.g. farmers and foresters) need to agree with the principles established if the proposals are to have any prospect of real success. To date this has been largely achieved through:

- representation on the project steering group;
- formal consultation on draft proposals.

Direct involvement

I.34 However, stakeholders should play a more active part in making judgements about preferred options for the future through participative workshops, and similar approaches involving all interested parties, to see if agreement can be reached on future directions. Such workshops need to:

- be expertly facilitated;